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ABSTRACT

The participants in the Workshop on Cooperation Between Different Types of Libraries, which was held in November, 1971, in Philadelphia, was surveyed in an effort to determine their attitudes toward interlibrary cooperation. Followup studies were conducted after the workshop to discover what, if any, effect the workshop had on the participants' attitudes. Generally, the workshop participants favored cooperative efforts between different types of libraries, although some problems concerning such efforts in this region were perceived. By the end of the workshop, a few conditions were identified as being significant obstacles to cooperation, and at the same time, actions were specified to overcome these barriers. At the end of the workshop, 70% of the respondents agreed that the lack of creative administrative leadership was a significant barrier to interlibrary cooperation, while only 10% agreed six months later in the followup studies. The impact of the workshop itself has not been completely measured by this study, but increased efforts for cooperation are encouraging. (Author/NH)

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION: SUMMARY OF A STUDY

by Dana Nitecki

What kinds of attitudes about interlibrary cooperation prevail among librarians? What barriers to achieving closer cooperative relationships between libraries do librarians see? Can a brief workshop dealing with this subject actually bring about changes in personal opinions and attitudes?

These questions gave impetus to a study, conducted during the Workshop on Cooperation Between Different Types of Libraries, which was held during mid-November, 1971 in Philadelphia. The State Library of Pennsylvania and Drexel University's Graduate School of Library Science jointly sponsored the meeting; its purpose was to explore attitudes toward cooperation, and to plan for cooperative activities in Eastern Pennsylvania. The workshop was planned to give participants ample opportunities for exploring their own and others' attitudes, to identify barriers within themselves, and to develop greater openness and ability to communicate with others about common problems.

The workshop was deliberately planned to be relatively unstructured; there were few presentations by speakers. Most of the time was spent by participants in small groups, getting to know each other, presenting differing viewpoints, and discussing them with the aim of achieving mutual understanding and a common base for planning. Group facilitators aided in this process, stimulating discussion, but not assuming positions of leadership in the group at any time.

Because of this kind of design, workshop planners felt that a study would be worthwhile which would serve two purposes. Reading and answering questions

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might help the workshop participants clarify their own attitudes; thus the questionnaire became a kind of self-assessment for them. In addition, if questionnaires were administered both before and at the end of the workshop, a comparison of answers might provide a means to assess whether or not attitude changes had actually taken place during this short time.

An attempt was also made to try to ascertain the long-range effects of the workshop -- to see what attitude changes may have occured after the participants had a chance to begin implementation of plans established in November. To do this, a six-month follow-up survey was conducted, by mailing questionnaires to the workshop participants in May, 1972. The results of the follow-up survey offer a profile of current attitudes toward interlibrary cooperation shared by some of the participants. Since this questionnaire was identical to the one used at the close of the workshop, a comparison of answers may also suggest some attitude changes which might have occurred since the workshop.

This sort of survey has obvious shortcomings. No control group was surveyed to compare responses, although pre-tests were conducted as a partial check on validity. It cannot be ascertained to what extent positive changes were engendered simply by the effect of a group of people interacting in a positive fashion. The group was self-selected and highly motivated in favor of the workshop objectives. The self-selection factor is especially influential in interpreting results of the six-month follow-up survey; response was purely voluntary and no further inquiries were made of participants who chose not to return the mailed questionnaires. In addition, improved or deteriorating interpersonal relations among participants, not related to their role as librarians, could seriously affect outcome. However, when these limitations are recognized,it becomes possible to interpret

the results with caution. No attempt is being made here to determine the extent of change in attitudes among librarians who participated in the workshop; instead the following report aims to briefly describe some of the kinds of attitudes and opinions about interlibrary cooperation which prevail among the librarians surveyed.[1]

METHODS:

During the workshop, participants were asked to respond to two different sets of questions, one administered at its start, the other at its close. The second set was also used in the follow-up study conducted six months after the workshop. The questionnaires and the evaluation of responses were modeled on a survey by E. Olson. [2]

Three types of responses were sought on each test:

1. agreement or disagreement with statements about cooperation taken from the literature and from Olson's survey (questions 1 through 15);

2. agreement or disagreement that certain factors, selected from Olson's list, are significant barriers to cooperation (questions 16 through 35);

3. naming of the most important priority for cooperation as perceived by participants (question 36).

The first and second types of responses were recorded on a 4-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", plus both a "don't know" and a "not applicable" position. The third type of response was open-ended.

The method used to analyze the responses to the statements and to the barriers consisted of (a) evaluating weighted scores for each individual question, (b) calculating arithmetic means for the workshop as a whole and for each of the four dis-

cussion groups, and (c) comparing arithmetic means. Responses to the statements were weighted on the basis of Olson's results, whenever applicable, and results of a pre-test given to library science faculty and students. A similar scale, which Olson used to measure responses to his barriers, was adopted, exeept that the "don't know" position was omitted for the workshop questionnaires. A total of 33 barriers were considered in the two questionnaires; however, only seven were repeated on both tests, which provided direct measurements of "change". (The same seven barriers also appeared on the follow-up questionnaire.)

Barriers to cooperation were indirectly noted in the naming of the most important priorities; many were stated as the elimination of a hindering factor. The priorities named on the two questionnaires given during the workshop were sorted into eleven categories and tallied. These categories were then ranked according to the number of priorities named in each, and the two lists were compared. The priorities named on the follow-up survey were similarly counted and ranked; this list was then compared to the earlier two.

Of the forty-five pairs of questionnaires distributed during the workshop, 84% (or thirty-eight sets) were valid returns. Seven pairs of questionnaires were invalid because four respondents failed to use the same identification on both questionnaires to allow pairing, one respondent completed only one of the two questionnaires, one respondent did not identify his discussion group, and one respondent was mistakenly given identical questionnaires both before and after the workshop. Of the forty-five follow-up questionnaires mailed in May, 1972, 75.5% (or 34 questionnaires) were returned. Of these, however, only 24(or 53% of the total mailing) were valid; the other ten returned could not be matched

with the corresponding set of questionnaires answered during the workshop. Because of the small size of the data base, analysis was limited to the statistical descriptions outlined above.

The participants who returned the follow-up questionnaires may have done so because they, more than the non-respondents, favored the workshop efforts to improve cooperative attitudes and perhaps wanted to reaffirm their support. Other factors, of course, may have prevented some librarians from responding to the follow-up; the mailed questionnaire may have arrived at the wrong place at an inconvenient time, it may have been misplaced or lost. For whatever reasons participants either responded or didn't, the resulting set of valid questionnaires was small and possibly self-selected. The group's profile of attitudes toward cooperation, as reflected by answers on these questionnaires, differs on some issues from the overall workshop response. A comparative interpretation of the follow-up answers to those on the earlier test should be made cautiously. For these reasons, descriptions of the results of the follow-up survey are included separately in the summary.

RESULTS:

Even though the questionnaire design, size of universe, and method of analysis have limitations, a summary of the six specific attitudes studied may be of interest.

1. <u>What are some of the priorities for cooperative ventures in Eastern Pennsylvania today</u>?

There was some shift at the conclusion of the workshop toward a broader

concept of cooperation, away from immediate self-interest and specific problems. A comparison of the three most cited categories of priorities, before and after the workshop, suggests a change in two factors.

Before Workshop (test 1)	After Workshop (test 2)
1. improve financial funding	1. establish leadership
2. establish leadership	2. obtain more knowledge and better communication
3. obtain more knowledge and better communication	3. change attitudes toward cooperation

The most notable change in priorities after the workshop was the de-emphasis of "financial funding" and the repeated requests for "leadership by the State Library".

Six months later, "improved financial funding" was again most often named as the most important priority by the respondents; "establish leadership" and "obtain more knowledge and better communication" were most often cited as a second choice.

2. Should a cooperative be open to all types of libraries within a community?

The participants generally agreed that all types of libraries should be involved in a cooperative, and there was a slight shift at the end of the workshop to strengthen this view. Among the respondents to the follow-up questionnaire, a majority answered affirmatively to questions favoring cooperation between different types of libraries both at the close of the workshop and six months later.

3. Should the community have a voice in cooperative decision making?

General agreement existed that the community should participate in cooperative decision making, however, there was a slight weakening of this opinion at the end of the workshop.

Over half (15) of the librarians responding to the follow-up questionnaire agreed that "in addition to librarians, members of the community should take part in the policy-making activities of cooperative systems". Seven disagreed with the statement, three of whom had agreed to it at the close of the workshop.

4. Do you favor cooperation regardless of pragmatic obstacles?

The workshop participants, as a whole, demonstrated a pragmatic yet favorable attitude toward cooperation, both before and after the meeting. They did not feel that cooperation is a virtue in itself; they did agree, however, that membership in cooperatives should be mandatory in order for the associations to operate successfully.

Similarly, on the follow-up survey, there was general agreement (18 respondents) that "libraries must join a cooperative in order to insure long-range benefits to all members of the region;" four of these had disagreed at the close of the workshop with this statement.

5. Considering existing barriers, are you optimistic about the future of cooperatives?

The workshop participants indicated overall optimism for the future of cooperatives, based on an evaluation of responses to the list of barriers both before and after the meeting. Such an interpretation assumes that by considering a barrier less significant, the respondent is more optimistic about the possibility of overcoming it.

The following seven barriers were repeated on all three questionnaires and are listed here in descending order of significance as indicated on the test at the end of the workshop:

1. lack of understanding by laymen of library needs
2. lack of adequate funds
3. fear of loss of local autonomy
4. jealousy and stubborness
5. delays in satisfying needs and requests of users
6. inertia and indifference
7. large number of institutions providing library services

Comparing the answers on the tests at the start and at the end of the workshop, there was virtually no change in the participants' evaluation of the significance of barriers to inter-library cooperation, except for two factors. "Lack of understanding by laymen of library needs" remained the most significant barrier on both tests. "Jealousy and stubborness" was considered more of a significant barrier after the workshop. Eight barriers were cited as "not applicable to Eastern Pennsylvania"; however no pattern can be found in these responses.

After six months, a slight change in the ranking of barriers is seen; however,much of the change may be attributed to the decrease in number of participants responding to the follow-up survey. Most of the respondents indicated agreement that the following factors are significant barriers:

1. lack of adequate funds
2. lack of understanding by laymen of library needs
3. fear of loss of local autonomy
4. inertia and indifference

However, an examination of the response of this group on the earlier tests indicates that virtually the same pattern appeared and differed slightly from the overall workshop average.

Responses to "jealousy and stubborness", for example, was almost equally distributed between agreement and disagreement on all the tests for this group of respondents, whereas the workshop average as a whole indicates greater shifts.

6. Based on your perception of present conditions and state of existing networks, do you have a positive outlook for the future of cooperatives?

At the close of the workshop, the participants' responses indicated a favorable outlook to the future; they also reaffirmed indications on the first test that some areas require immediate attention. Opinions seemed to indicate faith in the success of cooperatives despite problems such as the existence of competition among libraries and restricted public funding. At the end of the workshop the participants felt that the power of administrative leaders and existing means of communication were less effective than they felt at the beginning. The recognition of these two problems is indicated by the number of responses to some of the statements and by a high ranking of "leadership" and "more knowledge and better communication" on the list of priorities.

Table 1 illustrates the impact of the workshop in influencing attitudes toward cooperation and therefore indicates the directions of change in attitudes of each group. A "+" denotes a favorable change in attitude toward cooperation from the first to the second test; a "-" denotes an unfavorable change, "0" indicates no overall group change (in some cases, individuals changed their attitudes, but the group attitude remained constant). Parentheses indicate a small degree of change and are used to make a comparison between group responses without elaborating on the specific scores in each case.

Table 1: The impact of the workshop on the attitudes toward cooperation

Attitude	Group			
	1	2	3	4
Cooperatives should be directed to all types of libraries within a community.	+	+	-	0
The community should have a voice in cooperative decision making.	+	-	(-)	(-)
Cooperatives are a virtue.	+	(-)	+	+
Membership in cooperatives should be mandatory.	(+)	-	(+)	(-)
Working cooperatives exist.	-	+	-	-
Cooperatives serving the user exist.	+	+	0	(+)
Effective administrative leadership exists.	-	-	-	+
Communication will not be a hindrance to cooperation.	-	-	-	-
Competition and rivalry will not be a drawback to cooperatives.	-	+	+	+
A cooperative spirit exists among library administrators.	0	+	+	+

A positive change in Table 2 means that the barrier is not significant.

Table 2: Changes in responses toward the barriers to cooperation

Barrier	Group			
	1	2	3	4
A. lack of understanding by laymen of library needs	-	-	+	0
B. lack of adequate funds	+	-	+	0
C. fear of loss of local autonomy	+	(-)	(+)	(-)
D. jealousy and stubborness	-	-	-	-
E. delays in satisfying needs and requests of users	+	+	-	+
F. inertia and indifference	+	+	-	+
G. large number of institutions providing library services	+	+	+	0

The perception of the present state of cooperatives six months after the workshop reflects a moderately favorable outlook to the future among the librarians responding to the follow-up survey. For example, the majority (79%) disagreed with the statement that "'inter-library conflict' would be a better term to describe most networks than ' interlibrary cooperation'". However, only about one-third of the follow-up responses disagreed that "despite the general agreement that library service should be tailored to the community served, cooperative library systems have not done a very good job toward this end";12 (50%) agreed with the statement on the follow-up questionnaire, four of whom had disagreed with it at the end of the workshop.

Among the follow up participants "lack of creative administrative leadership" was often noted as a deterrent both in response to the barriers and in naming priorities. Seventeen (70%) of the respondents agreed that this was a significant barrier at the end of the workshop, while only 10 (41%) agreed six months later; seven respondents changed from agreeing at the close of the workshop to disagreeing six months later. Similarly, on the follow-up survey, 15 (63%) disagreed with the statement that "the leadership in this profession is by and large conservative and largely concerned with protecting the status quo".

Conclusions:

Generally, the participants in the workshop seemed to favor cooperative efforts between different types of libraries, although some problems concerning such efforts in this region were perceived. By the end of the workshop, a few conditions were identified as being significant obstacles to cooperation, and at the same time, actions were specified to overcome these barriers. Several conditions, such as restricted financial support, were viewed as less important at the close of the workshop than at the start. The data indicated an awareness by some of the attending librarians that cooperation was at an early stage of development in some parts of Eastern Pennsylvania, and that preparatory measures such as establishing leadership and changing attitudes, were the main tasks to be faced then. Six months later, the response of a select, motivated group of the original participants suggests that attempts have been made to begin implementing the plans made in November, that some experiences had reinforced a favorable attitude toward cooperation, and yet practical problems involved in such efforts were encountered and identified. The impact of the work-

shop itself has not been completely measured by this study; however, the increase in efforts for cooperation that have occurred in the last few months and the favorable personal comments extended to the workshop planners encourage such programs.

1/ The project was part of an assignment for "Measuring Library Use", a graduate course in library science at Drexel University, taken in Fall, 1971. I would like to thank Professor Briggitte L. Kenney, the professor of the course and the coordinator of the workshop, for her assistance in developing this survey.

2/ Edwin E. Olson. Interlibrary Cooperation. Final Report. U.S. Dept. of HEW-OE, September, 1970.

The following statements have been designed as a means to help you assess how you feel about some aspects of interlibrary cooperation. The planners of the workshop are asking for your opinion on some issues concerning cooperation and will again ask for your opinions Wednesday with a different set of questions. In this way, we hope to help determine the effect the workshop may have. The results will be shared with all of you.

Contents will be held confidential. The only identification requested is the last four digits of your social security number which will be used only to correlate the two sets of questions.

* * * *

The last four digits of your social security number are: _____

Please identify your regional group by checking the appropriate space below:

_____1. Greater Philadelphia Area

_____2. Harrisburg-Lancaster-Chambersburg Area

_____3. Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Williamsport Area

_____4. Easton-Bethlehem-Allentown-Reading Area

Please indicate your reaction to each statement by checking the appropriate column.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Although all types of institutions give lip service to the idea of cooperation, with few exceptions, no true patterns of cooperation have developed.	____	____	____	____	____
2. With limited resources, we can't afford wasteful duplication in collection and services among libraries in the same region.	____	____	____	____	____
3. Instances in which public, school and academic libraries have jointly, and formally, concerned themselves with the "overall library program for the community" are rare.	____	____	____	____	____
4. Membership in a cooperative is voluntary, thus libraries can wait to decide about joining until they perceive shortrange benefits to themselves.	____	____	____	____	____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
5. Networks should concentrate upon providing marketable services which no single member could produce.	____	____	____	____	____
6. Among institutions, cooperation should not be considered a virtue, but simply a scheme to get something done.	____	____	____	____	____
7. Concerning cooperative ventures, there is probably not much the average library administrator can do to effect change one way or another.	____	____	____	____	____
8. One important task of a library network is to establish areas of responsibility for each of its members.	____	____	____	____	____
9. Within a cooperative system, it is hard to know other members, to keep in touch, to learn the news (and the gossip) in order to work things out.	____	____	____	____	____
10. The local community has more to gain in terms of service and economy if its public, school, and academic libraries share resources with each other before calling upon supplementary resources outside the community.	____	____	____	____	____
11. A cooperative system should aim at "participatory democracy," offering those directly affected by the programs and policies of particular institutions a voice in determining what those programs and policies are.	____	____	____	____	____
12. Improvement in services will be achieved when libraries of the same type strengthen cooperation among themselves rather than merge resources with other types; thus for example, academic libraries should form networks which are separate from those of public or school libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
13. A degree of rivalry and competition is inevitable among similar institutions in the same locale, but this will in no way seriously hamper the success of a cooperative network.	____	____	____	____	____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
14. It is evident that the public either cannot or will not adequately support uncoordinated libraries such as public, school and academic libraries in the foreseeable future.	____	____	____	____	____
15. Participants in a network are usually determined to gain benefits for their own library before they are concerned with the network's success as a whole	____	____	____	____	____

Do you feel that each of the conditions listed below IS A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION IN EASTERN PA. TODAY? Please indicate your response by checking the appropriate columns.

Barrier to Cooperation?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable to E. Pa.
16. Lack of appropriate state enabling legislation.	____	____	____	____	____
17. Thinking of only one type of cooperation (e.g. interlibrary loan or school-public library).	____	____	____	____	____
18. Fear of loss of local autonomy.	____	____	____	____	____
19. Lack of adequate funds.	____	____	____	____	____
20. Mistrust between librarians.	____	____	____	____	____
21. Complacency & self-satisfaction	____	____	____	____	____
22. Lack of knowledge of needs of users.	____	____	____	____	____
23. Assumption that each library has unique rather than common needs.	____	____	____	____	____
24. Lack of contacts with voluntary and governmental agencies engaged in areawide cooperation.	____	____	____	____	____

Barrier to Cooperation?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable to E. Pa.
25. Institutional competition between school and public libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
26. Too many local government taxing units.	____	____	____	____	____
27. Lack of understanding by laymen of library needs.	____	____	____	____	____
28. Large number of institutions providing library service.	____	____	____	____	____
29. Clash of personalities.	____	____	____	____	____
30. Unwillingness to experiment.	____	____	____	____	____
31. Lack of public interest and concern for total library services.	____	____	____	____	____
32. Jealousy and stubborness.	____	____	____	____	____
33. Lack of information about the true function of different types of libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
34. Inertia & indifference.	____	____	____	____	____
35. Delays in satisfying needs and requests of users.	____	____	____	____	____

36. Please name the most important single thing needed to be done now to develop a successful cooperative network in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Thank you.

Now that the workshop is drawing to a close, your opinions on some issues concerning interlibrary cooperation are again requested. As mentioned Sunday, we hope that these pages will help the participants get a better picture of where they stand on some aspects of cooperation. Everyone here will be notified of the results.

The contents of these questions will be held confidential. The only individual identification requested is the last four digits of your social security number which will be used only to correlate this set of questions with those answered Sunday night.

* * * *

The last four digits of your social security number are:_____

If you changed groups during the workshop, please indicate in which group (s) you participated.

Please indicate your reaction to each statement by checking the appropriate column.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Despite the general agreement that library service should be tailored to the community served, cooperative library systems have not done a very good job toward this end.	____	____	____	____	____
2. We can't handle the volume of business as it is now; to try to increase services would be extremely difficult.	____	____	____	____	____
3. "Interlibrary conflict" would be a better term to describe most networks than "Interlibrary cooperation."	____	____	____	____	____
4. Cooperation should be considered pragmatically rather than as an end in itself.	____	____	____	____	____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
5. In networks it is important to develop projects which will receive financial support by the members.	____	____	____	____	____
6. Libraries must join a cooperative in order to insure long-range benefits to all members of the region.	____	____	____	____	____
7. It is easier for geographically separated libraries of the same type to cooperate than it is for neighboring libraries of a different type.	____	____	____	____	____
8. In networks it is important to set priorities that will cause member libraries to change their own goals.	____	____	____	____	____
9. In addition to librarians, members of the community should take part in the policy-making activities of cooperative systems.	____	____	____	____	____
10. In networks there is a problem in communicating rules and procedures to members.	____	____	____	____	____
11. If the taxpayer is to get his money's worth out of libraries, there must be coordination <u>within the community</u> between public, school and academic libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
12. The development of public library systems is well advanced, regional media centers for schools are in early stages of development, and associations of academic libraries have begun to multiply rapidly. Unless there is a quick counter-revolution, new empires will be established. Cooperation between libraries of different types is urgently needed to prevent the growth of such empires.	____	____	____	____	____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
13. Network members are basically oriented toward their own self-interest and not toward the interest of the network as a whole.	____	____	____	____	____
14. The public limits the funds it is willing to spend on libraries which operate independently of each other such as public, school, and academic libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
15. The leadership in this profession is by and large conservative and largely concerned with protecting the status quo.	____	____	____	____	____

Do you feel that each of the conditions listed below IS A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION IN EASTERN PA. TODAY? Please indicate your response by checking the appropriate columns.

Barrier to Cooperation?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable to E. Pa.
16. Lack of creative administrative leadership.	____	____	____	____	____
17. Difference in size of library collections.	____	____	____	____	____
18. Lack of properly trained staff.	____	____	____	____	____
19. Unpredictability of demands on the library by its legitimate users.	____	____	____	____	____
20. Fear of loss of local autonomy.	____	____	____	____	____
21. Failure of small libraries to realize the value of resources of larger libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
22. Incompatibility of equipment, procedures, and rules between libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
23. Distance between libraries and distance of users from the library.	____	____	____	____	____

Barrier to Cooperation?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable to E. Pa.
24. Lack of adequate funds.	____	____	____	____	____
25. Unawareness of successful cooperative efforts in other states.	____	____	____	____	____
26. Custodial mentality of librarians.	____	____	____	____	____
27. Fear of large libraries of being over-used and undercompensated.	____	____	____	____	____
28. Limitations on access to academic and special libraries.	____	____	____	____	____
29. Lack of understanding by laymen of library needs.	____	____	____	____	____
30. Large number of institutions providing library service.	____	____	____	____	____
31. Cumbersome fiscal practices of large governments.	____	____	____	____	____
32. Jealousy and stubborness.	____	____	____	____	____
33. Inadequacy of libraries to serve their own needs.	____	____	____	____	____
34. Inertia and indifference.	____	____	____	____	____
35. Delays in satisfying needs and requests of users.	____	____	____	____	____

36. Please name the most important single thing needed to be done now to develop a successful cooperative network in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your cooperation.